

Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (NPFC)

Basic Instrument

The [Convention](#) on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean. The Convention text was agreed to by the negotiating Participants on February 24, 2012. The Convention received its fourth instrument of ratification on January 21, 2015. The Convention will enter into force July 19, 2015, 180 days after the 4th ratification.

Implementing Legislation

N/A, the United States signed the NPFC Convention on May 2, 2012. The U.S. Senate has provided advice and consent for the Convention and the Congress is currently evaluating implementing legislation for the treaty.

Member Nations

N/A, the Convention has not yet entered into force. The participants include Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States, Canada and China.

Cooperating Fishing Entities

N/A, the Convention has not yet entered into force. The participants include Chinese Taipei.

Interim Secretariat Headquarters

Web Address: <http://nwpbfo.nomaki.jp>

Budget

The budget formula is still being discussed as part of the Preparatory Conference process and cannot formally be adopted until the Convention enters into force.

U.S. Representation

The United States Delegation has been led by the U.S. Department of State during the negotiations to develop the Convention. If the United States ratifies the Convention, the U.S. representation will be determined in the implementing legislation.

Description

The Convention was formed in response to calls from the international community (e.g., United States General Assembly Resolutions 59/25, 61/105 and 64/72) for States to take measures to address the impacts of fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) on the high seas, including through the establishment of new regional fisheries management organizations with the competence to regulate bottom fisheries and the impacts of fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems in areas where no such organization exists. The Convention also responds to calls from the international community to close international jurisdictional gaps for high seas fisheries.

The Convention establishes a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) through which Parties will cooperate to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Convention Area of the North Pacific Ocean, while protecting the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur. Cooperation under NPFC will address fisheries resources not covered under pre-existing international fisheries management instruments and will help to prevent impacts on fisheries resources in areas subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

The Convention Area is the high seas area (i.e. outside of 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones) roughly north of 20-degrees N latitude and south of the Aleutians. Of particular concern to the NPFC are bottom fisheries over seamounts that would have significant adverse impacts on VMEs. The participants to the negotiations of NPFC have already agreed to interim measures aimed at protecting VMEs and the sustainable management of high seas bottom fisheries in the Convention Area. The interim measures contain measures for any fishing entity to abide by, including conducting assessments to prove that contemplated fishing activities would not have significant adverse impacts on VMEs, and sustainability of the fishery resources.

The new Convention will establish two committees, a Scientific Committee and a Technical and Compliance Committee, to carry out its functions. Even as the NPFC is being structured, the Parties are working on developing the following: (a) A 5-year science research plan, (b) standards, rules and procedures for the compilation and management of data for effective stock assessments, (c) standards, rules, and procedures for vessel monitoring, transshipment, and observer coverage, and (d) an encounter protocol for bottom fishing.

As a general rule, decisions by the Commission will be adopted by consensus, however there are provisions for voting, if that is determined to be necessary. There is also an objection procedure.

Staff Contact

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